

Destandardised Career Entry? An Analysis of the Transition to Professional Life by Swiss Sports Science Graduates

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In recent decades, sport has become more and more important as an occupational field, due to the increasing differentiation and commercialisation of sports. Although schools continue to be a highly relevant occupational field for graduates in Switzerland, many of them also find jobs in other areas outside schools (e.g. clubs, tourism, sports agencies). This paper will analyse to what extent these developments are associated with destandardisation processes at the time when sports science graduates embark on their professional career.

Destandardisation can be equated with a growing deviation from the normal life trajectory, which can be seen as a reduction or relaxation of the temporal standards for life trajectories. As a result, (1) the age at which certain transitions occur and their duration vary more strongly; (2) the incidence of transitions, sequences and courses is reduced, while that of less clearly defined intermediate states, and repeat and reverse states, increases; (3) furthermore, the actual diversity of sequences and links between transitions and phases increases (Brückner & Mayer, 2005).

For this purpose, continuous professional trajectories were gathered from a sample of $n = 742$ sport science graduates from all Swiss universities, to provide retrospective longitudinal data for the complete cohorts (1984/85, 1994/95 and 2004/05). Optimal matching analysis (Martin & Wiggins, 2011) was used to reveal underlying structures, after which the cohorts were compared to check any tendencies towards destandardisation empirically.

Only a minority of all Swiss sports scientists is affected by destandardisation tendencies. There is no noteworthy increase in the variety of sequential patterns over time; instead, the normal occupational career remains clearly pronounced across all

three cohorts. If anything, a tendency towards destandardised occupational careers may be observed in the field of schools.

References

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